

AT HOME

Piero Lissoni brings simple, silent design to Washington

By Merlisa Lawrence Corbett
Special to The Washington Examiner

Great design should be seen, not heard. That's the motto of award-winning Italian designer Piero Lissoni, who said he likes to create "simple, silent" interiors.

By silent he means calm, neutral designs that evoke tranquility and peacefulness. A master at minimalism, Lissoni's philosophy on interior design is that it should "quietly impact its surroundings."

Lissoni's designs are featured at a new 6,000-square-foot showroom called Boffi Georgetown. He was there last week as part of AIA/DC Architecture Week and designed the interior of the showroom, as well as the kitchen and baths it displays.

"It's pret-a-porter meets haute couture," Lissoni said.

Sleek, classic and customizable down to the smallest detail, Lissoni's kitchens are ultramodern, yet timeless. "No two kitchens are alike," he said.

He chooses natural materials, such as stone tile, reclaimed wood and solid wood, and contrasts them with man-made materials, such as stainless steel and solid surfaces, to



Italian designer Piero Lissoni's Iceland bathtub, left, is characterized by its smooth, shell-like shape. His wash basin, right, is made of 310 degree bended plates in transparent crystal. COURTESY DUILIO BITETTO

create a minimalist environment. Although they often incorporate advances in technology, many American kitchen designs seem stuck in the past, with old-world

European, farmhouse and other traditional styles still the standard in new-home construction.

But Lissoni sees a trend toward more functional, sophisticated and modern design.

"It's funny, in the 1950s, the European kitchens we had were called Americana," he said, pointing out that some midcentury kitchens, with curved counters and sleek white cabinets, are similar to modern Italian design.

Although seamless on the outside, his kitchens are packed with compartments to hold every pot, pan and utensil. He compared it to fine Italian luggage.

"Gucci luggage outside is pure beauty," he said. "Inside it's like a machine. That is what the kitchen is. A machine; a food machine."

The Washington area, he says, is primed for high-end Italian design.

Resources

Boffi Georgetown
boffigeorgetown.com



historic architecture and the abundance of old homes in the area make the District perfect for Italian design.

"I think this area is one of the most beautiful in the United States," he said. "The buildings have so much character. People want to have the best designs, the best products in these spaces."

One challenge for Boffi is finding contractors with the skills needed to install its one-of-a-kind kitchens and baths.

"Some of our tubs are made of heavy stone and you must have reinforced floors," Gavazzi said. He recalled one client in Switzerland who had a Boffi tub, which weighed 1,760 pounds, lowered by helicopter into the living room, where it remained, like a work of art on display.

"He was one of those rock and roll types," Lissoni said of the client. "We have special clients. We think there are a lot of special people in Washington."

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